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THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

April 16, 1958

Mr. Lawrence Mitchell  
East-West Contacts Office  
Department of State  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

This is a brief statement of what we expect to discuss at the international Arctic Conference, in Copenhagen May 19, 20, 21, also of what I hope the Conference will recommend to the Nations concerned at the end of the Conference.

The theory that America was originally settled from Asia via the Bering Straits remains only a theory. A great many Danes, Canadians and Americans have been working on this question for the last two generations and current theories in the western world are very much at variance with theories advanced by the Russians. As you know, there has been much anthropological and archaeological work done by the Russians in Northeastern Siberia in recent years. Just one example of these differences in opinion will serve. Almost all westerners look to Siberia and no traces of Eskimo, west of the Kolyma. We have recently found traces of very ancient man in the American Arctic, which have no parallel in Siberia.

After more than twenty years of work in the Arctic I am convinced that these basic problems cannot be solved unless westerners actually work in Siberia with the new generation of Russian scientists and unless Russians are actually shown in the American Arctic what these very ancient sites look like. Moreover, the Russian physical anthropologists working on living races have a somewhat different system of measurement than those of us in the west and they will never solve their problems of racial origins unless they measure American natives in their own system. Both the Russians and the westerners are concerned about these technical difficulties in our research and part of our discussions will certainly be concerned with an exchange of publications, translations, scientific terminology and with discussions as to what requires urgent investigation. The Conference will at least serve to iron out these difficulties.

But the essential objective will be to reach a proposal concerning the exchange of scientists in the Arctic. I am not at all certain that the Russian representatives at this meeting will join with us to recommend

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such an exchange in the Arctic, but I am optimistic after my discussions in Moscow last June. Therefore I shall try to arrange and encourage a recommendation somewhat as follows:

That the six Countries concerned, i.e. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Canada and the United States make it possible to carry out combined international research in Anthropology and Archaeology in the Arctic areas. Specifically, and to begin this international cooperation, that two or three western scientists be invited to work in Chukotsky Land, in Northeastern Siberia, primarily at East Cape and Indian Point, but also as far west as the mouth of the Kolyma; that two or three Russians be invited to work in Alaska, particularly at Cape Denbigh, Point Hope and Point Barrow, but inland as far as Fairbanks.

That Russians also be invited to work with Danish expeditions in West Greenland and with a Canadian or American expedition in the vicinity of Hudson's Bay. Canadians and Danes also be invited to work in Northeastern Siberia and if possible with a Russian expedition at the mouth of the Ob. In every expedition the foreigners will work with nationals of that country.

We know that the men attending the Conference are the ones who will be involved in this exchange. For example, Larsen of Denmark, I, and a student of mine, would probably be the ones to work in Northeastern Siberia, with Levin or Okladnikov of the Academy of Sciences. Debetz who worked on our Eskimo collections would undoubtedly be the man to measure a selection of native peoples in Alaska. Okladnikov has already been invited to work in West Greenland by the Danes, without reciprocity.

One specific thing that I would like to arrange is the transfer of Russians and Americans at the Diomed Islands in the Bering Straits. This would save us a great deal in the cost of travel and be the most practical way to reach the areas in which we are interested. If the Russians are able to go along with such recommendations I would hope to begin the exchanges in the Spring of 1959. The working season in this part of the world is only about two months, July and August. The research in Canada and the United States will quite certainly be financed by this Museum, the Danish National Museum, the Arctic Institute and possibly the Canadian Government. We would expect that in each case the research would be financed in the country in which it takes place.

We realize, of course, that in this area there are serious security problems involved in foreign travel. In most cases we would have to work through the Defense Department, the Coast Guard, or other paramilitary organizations operating in the Far North. For example, almost any travel in the far north of Canada would be carried out through the Arctic Institute and by means of Military aircraft. I presume this is true in Siberia also. Naturally, I am most anxious to see if the Russians will at this point accept such an arrangement for Siberia.

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We may end up with only pious generalities about the need for international cooperation, but it is certainly our intention to pin this down to specific times, places and individuals if it is possible at this point, I should come back from the Conference with such specific recommendations.

Very best wishes,

/s/

Freelich Rainey  
Director

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